

The Parish Church of St. Mary, Selly Oak

Bristol Road, Selly Oak, Birmingham, B29 6ND



www.stmarysellyoak.org.uk



Statement of Conditions, Needs and Traditions of the Parish

March 2019

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St. Mary's Vision Statement

We are here to proclaim and celebrate the love of God for all and to live out the values of the Gospel in the community. We are outward looking and encourage spiritual nourishment and growth through prayer, worship and fellowship.

The values by which we seek to live:

Love
Integrity
Hope and vision for, and belief in the future
Generosity of spirit
Inclusivity and friendship, reaching out to those in need in the Parish
Courage to be

The Context

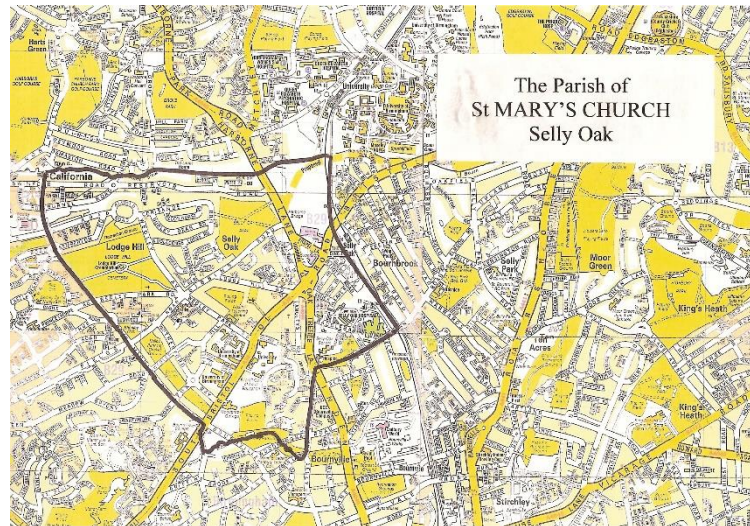
Description of the Parish

Population: approx. 14000

Electoral Roll: 109

The Parish of St. Mary's, Selly Oak dates from 1861 and is situated in a south-western suburb of Birmingham.

The population of the parish and Selly Oak as a whole is increasing due to extensive residential developments on the site of the former Selly Oak Hospital (closed in October 2011 with services moving to the redeveloped



and expanded Queen Elizabeth Hospital) and the building of student apartment blocks to house the large and increasing student population who attend the University of Birmingham. There are 4571 residences currently logged within our parish which consist of a mix of Victorian and pre-war housing, modern estates and some upper-middle class housing. Another 300 houses, currently under construction on the site of Selly Oak Hospital, should be completed by the end of 2020 according to the developer Persimmon. There is also a large 10-storey student apartment block under construction just within the parish boundary, opposite Selly Oak Railway Station.

The ethnic mix of the permanent population of the Selly Oak Ward is predominantly white British (approximately 72% at the time of the 2011 Census), with 19% Asian and 4% Afro-Caribbean residents. The transient student population also adds to the range of ethnicities in the parish.

The proportion of the population who are economically active (approximately 92%) is significantly higher than the Birmingham and national figure. The pre-dominant occupation groupings in the parish are:

- Professional occupations
- Education
- Human health and social work
- Wholesale and retail trade

Major institutions within the parish include:

- St. Mary's Church of England Primary School – see references later in the document to links with the church, opportunities and expectations
- Cherry Oak Special Primary School
- Watermill Primary School
- Selly Oak Trust School and Sixth Form Centre
- The University of Birmingham School – a free school which opened in September 2015 and is the first secondary University Training School in the country
- University of Birmingham (Selly Oak Campus) – the University Chaplain, Rev. Sharon Jones, at times assists in our worship
- Acorns Children's Hospice – on the borders of the parish but use the church for an annual carol service
- Lodge Hill Crematorium and Cemetery – where our clergy are regularly called upon to lead services
- Crowley House – a Home Office bail hostel for young female offenders immediately to the south of the church
- Townsend Gardens – housing for underprivileged young women who are homeless or at the risk of homelessness
- SENSE Touchbase Pears Centre officially opened by HRH The Princess Royal in July 2018 – the previous incumbent had started to establish links with the centre
- Fircroft College of Adult Education – a specialist residential adult college
- Woodbroke Quaker Study Centre – the only Quaker study centre in Europe
- The Al-Mahdi Institute – a place of Muslim scholarship

There are also a number of health centres and nursing homes for the elderly within the parish with which St. Mary's has close links.

The Battery Retail Park and the newly completed Selly Oak Shopping Park are the major commercial centres in the parish. These house major retail and restaurant chains including:

- Sainsbury's (having recently moved from its previous site on the Selly Oak Triangle – potential redevelopment site)
- Argos
- Marks and Spencer's Food
- Next
- Wilko
- JD Sports
- Superdrug
- The Works
- Costa Coffee
- Greggs
- Nando's

- Homebase
- Currys PC World
- TK Maxx
- Frankie and Benny's

There are also a range of shops, restaurants, takeaways and public houses along the Bristol Road many of which cater for the needs of the student population as well as the local community.

There are excellent public transport services within the parish. There are several bus services connecting with the city centre and other parts of Birmingham. Selly Oak is on the cross city train line with trains up to six times an hour into Birmingham New Street Station.

Church Information and Parish Data

The Pattern of Church Life

The style of worship at St. Mary's combines liberal teaching within a formal Eucharistic liturgy all set against our strong musical tradition.

Ministry Team

The Ministry Team of St. Mary's currently comprises of:

- Rev. Jayne Adams – Assistant Priest (self-supporting)
- Rev. David Parker – Assistant Priest (self-supporting)
- Mary Cutler – Reader

There is also a small team of lay people who assist with deacon duties at our Sunday 10am Communion service and lead Sunday Evening Worship.

In addition to this team, several members of the congregation assist with Baptism services. There is lay administration of the chalice, altar servers and taking home communion in the homes of the sick and elderly. There is also lay involvement with intercessions and bible readings (Old



Testament, Psalm and New Testament) with the deacon sometimes taking responsibility for the reading of the Gospel.

Worship

Sunday: (1st, and 5th Sunday of the month)

8.00am = Holy Communion (BCP)

10.00am = Parish Communion (Common Worship)

6.30pm = Evensong

Sunday: (2nd and 4th Sunday of the month)

8.00am = Holy Communion (BCP)

10.00am = Parish Communion (Common Worship)

6.30pm = Evening Worship

3rd Sunday:

8.00am = Holy Communion (BCP)

10.00am = Parish Communion (Common Worship)

6.30pm = Choral Evensong

A Family Communion service is held at 10am on a Sunday approximately once a month.

We currently use incense in our 10am communion service three times a year on Passion Sunday, Trinity Sunday and All Saints.

Weekdays:

8.00am (Monday to Friday) = Morning Prayer

10.00am (Wednesday) = Holy Communion (BCP) followed by Open Church Coffee Morning until 12.00pm

Other annual services include:

- Family services to mark Mothering Sunday and Father's Day
- Harvest Festival
- Service of Memory
- Remembrance Service
- Carol Service
- Crib Service





St. Mary's has a strong musical and choral tradition and a robed four-part choir, led by our organist and choirmaster Mr John Stormont, sings every Sunday at the 10am service, Choral Evensong and at other special services as required e.g. festivals and weddings. The choir is affiliated to the RSCM and hold their weekly choir practice at 7.30pm every

Friday. They have connections with the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire organ department and the Birmingham Organists' Association. Being close to their areas of residence, we welcome students from the University of Birmingham to join the choir during their years of study.

During the previous calendar year the following have taken place in church:

Baptisms	17
Confirmation	6
Weddings	11
Funerals	8 (with our clergy also conducting almost 100 services between them at Lodge Hill Crematorium)

The average Sunday attendance across the three services is 87 adults and 12 children.

Teaching

We have a thriving Junior Church which has lay leadership and strong parental involvement. They leave the 10am Sunday service after the opening hymn and a prayer and go across to the Church Hall where they partake in instruction and activities linked to the theme for our worship that day. They



return shortly before communion so that they can receive their blessing from the celebrant. Prior to the end of the service, the young people are invited to the chancel steps to share



with the whole congregation what they have been doing. The young people and their families remain in church for our Family Service.

It is a particular joy at this point in St. Mary's history to see that the Junior Church is flourishing and growing due, in no small part, to the dedication of the leaders and parents.

St. Mary's Church of England Primary School

We have close links with our church primary school situated on Lodge Hill Road. St. Mary's Church of England Primary School is a two-form entry school with 420 students currently on roll. The school provides a friendly, caring and happy environment, where children feel confident about and are fully engaged with their learning. Their work is strongly based on the values of forgiveness, respect, compassion, courage, honesty and perseverance. This popular, successful and over-subscribed school opened a new extension in Spring 2013 to allow it to increase its roll.



Significant recent history in the life of the school includes not only its expansion but also:

- Key Stage 2 outcomes have been significantly above the national figures, and rising year on year, for the last five years
- In February 2017 the school was inspected by OFSTED and judged to be GOOD
- In May 2017 the distinctiveness and effectiveness of St. Mary's School as a Church of England school was judged to be OUTSTANDING following a SIAMS inspection

The previous incumbent served on the Governing Body and met with the headteacher, Mr Stuart Smith, on a half-termly basis. The previous incumbent, and our assistant priests, delivered assemblies in school several times each term. The previous incumbent also worked with students on the Worship Council, delivered staff training on the Holy Trinity (prior to SIAMS) and how to use Bible stories to articulate the school's vision and delivered workshops to students. School services also take place in church at the end of every half-term.

We would expect our new incumbent to not only maintain but further strengthen these links with the primary school so that we can fulfil the school's motto of ***"bringing out the best in each other"***.



Study Groups

There are a number of study groups, facilitated and hosted by lay members of the congregation, which run throughout the year.

The Way Group meets on the second Monday of each month in the evening to explore spirituality and avenues for spiritual growth. Recent topics for discussion have included the book 'Essential Discipleship' by Rowan Williams, favourite Psalms, Challenges of Faith and Belief, Julian of Norwich, Visits to the Holy Land and Meditation on a Word.

The Issues Group meets on a monthly basis on a Thursday evening to discuss and explore topical and social issues that are of particular interest to St. Mary's and feed their thoughts back to the PCC.

Our Theological Book Group meets at least three times a year to discuss a religious text that members of the group have read in between meetings. The text currently being read is 'St. Augustine's Confessions'.

Another book group meets on a more regular basis (approximately each month) to discuss classic and popular fiction which have a link to religion. Books read over recent months have included 'The Handmaid's Tale' by Margaret Atwood, 'The Last Secret of the Temple' by Paul Sussman, 'Barchester Towers' by Anthony Trollope and 'The Cleaner of Chartres' by Salley Vickers.

There is also a Bible Study Group which meets every week to discuss texts written about books and passages of the bible. They have recently finished their study of 'Jacob and the Prodigal: Peace for the One Who is Far Off' by K.E. Bailey and explored 'Advent for Everyone: A Journey Through Luke' by Tom Wright during the season of Advent. The group are currently studying William Barclay's "The Gospel of Luke"



Every year the church arranges a Quiet Day prior to Lent and, in recent years, a weekend pilgrimage to Walsingham for further reflection and contemplation.

Ecumenical Lent Groups are held in conjunction with other Selly Oak churches.

Fellowship

Fellowship between members of the congregation and parishioners is central to life at St. Mary's. Many social and fundraising activities take place throughout the year. These include:

- Men's and Women's Groups which meet monthly and take part in various social activities;
- Ramble twice yearly;
- Coffee Mornings each month hosted by different members of the congregation;
- Weekly Open Church (every Wednesday after Holy Communion);
- Quiz and Skittle Nights;
- Tea Parties;
- Car Boot Sales twice yearly;
- Concerts in church;
- Working Parties at various times in the year to tend to the fabric and grounds of the church.



It has also been tradition in recent years for a large number of people in the congregation to come together to perform a play or pantomime. Recent performances have included 'Cinderella', 'Alice in Wonderland', 'Dick Whittington' and 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' with each given a "special" St. Mary's twist!

Other groups include our Choir, a small but dedicated team of Bellringers, our Flower Arrangers and 'Knit and Natter' group.



Collaboration with other Christians

We are in a cluster with other CofE churches in the local area – St. Michael's, Bartley Green and St. Gabriel's, Weoley Castle. Joint services are held throughout the year and especially for confirmation and on Ascension Day. The cluster also arranges a pre-Lent Quiet Day.

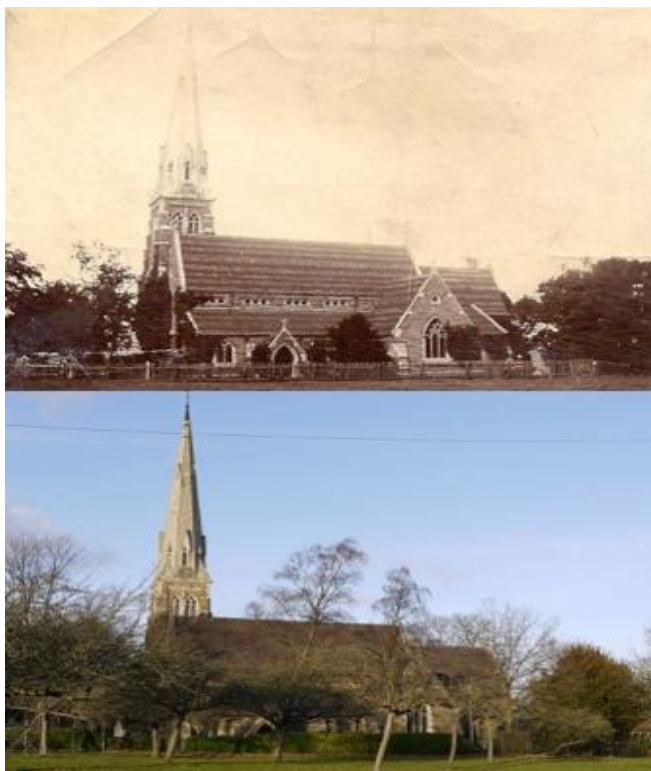
There is regular contact with the local Methodist and United Reformed churches. Joint services are held on occasion and ecumenical Lent groups held which are attended by members of all churches.

Relations with other Faith Communities

The Al-Mahdi Institute lies towards the edge of the parish. This is a centre for Muslim scholarship established in 1993 providing education, research and outreach opportunities to future generations of Muslim thinkers. They are committed to both intra and inter-faith dialogue and look to provide a platform whereby diverse religious voices can learn from one another. St. Mary's has a good relationship with the institute. However, contact is sporadic.

St. Mary's Church of England Primary School has also recently established links with a primary school in Small Heath which has a predominantly Muslim population. Plans are in place for their students to visit St. Mary's in order to further enhance their knowledge and appreciation of Christianity with reciprocal arrangements for our students to visit their local Mosque.

Description of Church Buildings and Facilities



The church was built in 1861 and consecrated by the Bishop of Worcester. It was listed as a Grade Two building in 1982. It stands at the end of a long drive off the Bristol Road with additional access through the graveyard from Lodge Hill Road.

The church, dedicated to St. Mary, was designed in the Gothic Revival style and is built of coursed sandstone, enlivened both inside and out. Brick walls are faced externally with a mix of Bromsgrove and Bath stone and bands of Weoley Castle stone run horizontally around the inside of the church. The ceiling comprises of open beams painted gold with a leaf motif with a blue background in-between.

The church is cruciform and consists of the sanctuary, a chancel, nave, south and north transepts with this last area being a Lady Chapel. There are three aisles: north, main and south. In the north west corner of the church, under the tower, is the Baptistry. The tower is surmounted by a 45 metre high spire with a fine peal of 8 bells. The Clergy Vestry is on the south side adjacent to the south transept and the Choir Vestry is on the opposite side by the Lady Chapel. In the chancel and south transept is a well-maintained 3-manual pipe organ, rebuilt in 1996 with further restoration work to take place soon. Abutting the Clergy Vestry on the east wall is a chamber housing the organ blower. On the south side is a porch, which provides the main access into the church with the west doors, only used for weddings and other major services. On the north side, outside the choir vestry is a small extension built in 1964 to house a single toilet. There is a path around the west and north walls of the church to provide easy access to this facility. Under the Tower is a cellar which was once used as a mortuary but now a store. Under the Choir Vestry is a boiler room which houses a relatively new oil-fired boiler.



There are nine stained glass windows in the church:

- East window = *The Ascension*, 1861
- West window = *The Transfiguration*, 1861
- South west window = *Mary and Martha*, 1872
- South aisle south window = *The Good Samaritan*, 1866
- South transept west window = *Christ and Mary Magdalene*
- South transept south window = *Worship of the Kings*
- South transept east window = *Peter and John at the Tomb*
- Lady Chapel north window = *Healing and Resurrection*
- Baptistry = *Blessing the Children*



The church is used on a fairly regular basis by the BBC as a filming location for the daytime soap opera 'Doctors'.

Recent works on the church have included significant repairs to the church roof, internal re-decoration and an extension on the church hall. Planned or imminent works include the potential installation of a new heating system.



The churchyard was open to burials from the time of consecration until it was closed for burials in 1899. Birmingham City Council Parks Service took over the care of the churchyard in 1927.

The Church Hall, to the west of the church, was built in 1974 and contained a parlour, sports hall, kitchen, toilets and store room. An extension was completed in 2018 providing an additional room, kitchen space and toilets. The hall is used throughout the week by a before and after school club, nursery, school holiday club and on a weekly basis by an amateur operatic group. It is also used to support other groups in our local community. The Birmingham Forward Steps Group, a council run venture, uses the hall twice a week. As they explain on their website, "this new service has been designed to bring together the current health visiting service and children's centres, so that families can access the help they need from pregnancy until their child starts

school."

The vicarage is situated to the east of the church and is a late 1960s building comprising of a lounge, dining room, study, cloakroom/toilet, kitchen, utility room and garage on the ground floor with four bedrooms, bathroom and a separate toilet on the first floor. There is an extensive garden to the rear of the property.

Administration and Finance

The previous incumbent produced a weekly news sheet and dealt with church correspondence (post, email etc.) with the aid of his own computer. The PCC Secretary supported in this with correspondence she received directly and in the setting of meeting agendas and writing minutes. There is also voluntary secretarial and administrative help with maintaining and updating registers, oversight of the church website and email (and other) communication with the congregation and parishioners.

The weekly Vestry Hour for booking of weddings and baptisms is staffed jointly by the incumbent and lay volunteers.

As well as the PCC, there are various other sub-committees which meet every couple of months. These include the Ministry Team, Finance and General Purposes, Fabric, Hall Management, Stewardship, Outreach and Social. There are also annual meetings of other groups that provide valuable service to church life – Servers, Intercessors, Lesson Readers, Sidespeople, Junior Church Leaders, Bellringers etc.

Finance

The financial situation at the time of producing this statement is reasonably satisfactory. The General Fund has reserves equivalent to approximately six months' expenditure, there are various Regulated Funds with adequate balances and the PCC has recently received a substantial legacy from a longstanding member of the congregation. Our Common Fund has always been paid in full and we make charitable donations annually in addition. From 2013 to 2017 there were modest annual surpluses on the General Fund. 2018 proved more difficult as stewardship income had fallen following the deaths or departures of several significant donors and a deficit of £2,897 was incurred. It is hoped that giving and fundraising will increase to give at least a break even position in 2019.

The most recent incumbent did not wish to receive expenses but prior to this clergy expenses had always been reimbursed in full and we are prepared for this practice to resume if required.

Significant Recent History

Over recent years our church has seen many changes, growth in certain areas and also faced some challenges as we have developed and evolved. Whether faced with change or challenge the clergy and laity have addressed this with positivity and a determination to grow and raise the profile of the church in the parish and wider community.



In terms of our growth and change, we have seen an increase in numbers of children attending our Junior Church during the Parish Communion service with more young families having joined our congregation. Conversely, we have been saddened by the deaths of a number of elderly and long-standing members of our congregation. Many of

those had made significant contributions to the life and leadership of the church. The size and intake of our primary school has increased over recent years and they now make much more use of the church throughout the academic year. Our ministry team has been broadened and strengthened with the licencing of our two assistant priests and an increase in lay input to services and leadership of the church. We also continue to grow the opportunities we provide for the congregation and parishioners to share in each other's fellowship through our social and fundraising events.

There have, recently, been several new initiatives introduced to develop our mission, ministry and outreach to the parish and wider community:

- Wednesday Open Church to reach out in particular to more vulnerable members of the community;
- the Bereavement Group established to support the families of the recently deceased;
- our two Books Groups, theological and secular;
- our annual pantomime or play which includes the participation of, and audiences from, the wider community.

Throughout these times, we have faced some difficult issues – some more short-lived than others. However, the ways in which we have grown have helped us to overcome these. One was the sudden illness of our previous incumbent several years ago. We were able to keep it “business as usual” throughout his illness and recovery as a result of our assistant priests and wider ministry team, and all members of the congregation pulling together to ensure all aspects of parish life could continue. Other difficulties surround finance and fabric. With less income through giving and stewardship and rising costs it is a continual struggle to ensure that we do not end the financial year in deficit whilst also maintaining the upkeep of our fabric. We are blessed however with a highly skilled treasurer who bears the brunt of this battle on our behalf!



One particular issue with fabric in recent times has been the need to have major repairs to the roof. We were successful in securing a national grant providing the finance to carry out the necessary repairs. Another success was that we were able to fundraise the funds to build a significant extension to our Church Hall. This has allowed us to widen provision for children and young people in the parish and community and provide additional toilet facilities that can be used by our congregation and guests at other services (weddings, funerals etc.).

Opportunities and Expectations



St. Mary's presents great opportunities for a new incumbent. We are situated in a great location and in a growing parish. We have a beautiful church building in good surroundings and associated with the position is a spacious vicarage with a large garden.

There is the opportunity and massive potential to grow this parish further and raise its profile within the wider community. A priority for the parish is

its outreach work and we would expect any new incumbent to lead us in making our presence even more visible in Selly Oak. There is an expansion in the population of the parish – students and young professionals – giving us the opportunity to build our congregation.

St. Mary's Church of England Primary School already has close connections with the church, and the headteacher and our previous incumbent were passionate about fostering and enhancing this. It would be expected that our new incumbent, with the support of the ministry team and others, would make this a priority. The school has recently established links with a primary school in Small Heath which has a predominantly Muslim population and plans are afoot for students from that school to visit our church and develop their understanding of Christianity.

We do have other schools in the parish – Watermill Primary School and the University of Birmingham School – giving us the opportunity to develop links with a greater number of young people in Selly Oak. Indeed, we have recently started to work with Watermill Primary School and the headteacher is passionate about building on this. The University of Birmingham itself lies just outside of the parish boundary (but many students live within the parish) and links with this institution could be further developed through the University Chaplain (Rev. Sharon Jones) and their Anglican Society.

Whilst our Junior Church is currently in a healthy state, we would expect an incumbent to make this a priority for their ministry – taking a leading role, ensuring its continued success and exploring ways of involving young people more in our worship. One demographic who are under-represented in our congregation is teenagers/adolescents. We would welcome an incumbent who could work with us to help us become attractive to this age group and make them feel welcomed and included in our mission and ministry. We have a “captive audience” in our local schools and the youth group that use our Church Hall.

The aforementioned Church Hall, recently extended, and the Church itself provide opportunities for greater use for other activities (our own and others) and by other organisations.

In short, we would expect an incumbent to help us evolve our practices further, help us reach out to even more (and a more diverse range of) people in the parish and wider community and enhance our pastoral work and mission.



Vision for the Future – Mission and Ministry



St. Mary's has a clearly defined Vision Statement (see page 3) which is at the centre of who and what we are and permeates our work within the parish. This was "revised" by the PCC and significant representation from the wider congregation in November 2018. We need to be encouraged to take this deeper into the parish and wider community, and into our own hearts.

Our vision for the future mission and ministry is to maintain an approach that is broad, open and liberal, founded on ideas of inclusivity and also maintains our strong choral tradition. We want our church to be the true centre and heart of the parish that welcomes all in society and provides a safe and healing environment for, particularly, those who may be vulnerable for whatever reason.

We believe passionately that our mission and ministry should include the young people of the parish and needs to build on the strong foundations already in place.

We are committed to continue to grasp opportunities presented through baptism, wedding preparation and bereavement counselling to help all recognise the love of God and seek spiritual nourishment in their lives.

Selly Oak is a constantly evolving area and we want to ensure that our church keeps apace with the changes in the area and that we provide a strong sense of community in our caring open church family.



Our New Incumbent



Our new incumbent should be a person of God, serving our Lord in this place and at this time and possess a “middle of the road” churchmanship and liberal theology. We are looking for an incumbent who will uphold our spiritual life through prayer, preaching and visitation, be driven by a positive and inclusive mission and support and implement our vision.

In addition to this we seek an incumbent who will/who is:

- committed to a Gospel of inclusivity and welcome, embrace and represent the diverse community in which we live;
- work to enhance our presence and position in the parish and community;
- be forward thinking in ways that the church may involve the wider community;
- further enhance and grow our work with young people in its many forms;
- actively support and help to develop our strong musical and choral tradition further;
- well-read and interested in broadening their own knowledge and the knowledge of the congregation through reading and current theological thinking;
- display a strong commitment to inter-faith dialogue and work ecumenically with other Christian churches and non-Christian institutions in the parish;
- actively support in maintaining the traditions and characteristics of St. Mary’s Church of England Primary School and work to enhance our relationship further by:
 - understanding the role of the school in the community
 - showing understanding of how a multi-faith community can be a binding force in wider society
 - supporting the Senior Leadership Team and all staff in their understanding of, and ability to interpret theology
 - being part of the school’s governance – be an advocate for the school, be supportive but also provide challenge
 - being a visible presence in the school and demonstrate enjoyment of being in a dynamic, vibrant school environment.
- further develop links with other schools and educational institutions within the parish.

To fulfil this role, we look for an incumbent who is/has:

- a comprehensive team leader – looking to utilise individual time and talents of all members of the congregation, helping them to grow and develop their own skills and ministry;
- enthusiastic, caring and innovative in approach to all age groups and aspects of worship and outreach;
- passionate about the pastoral work of the church;
- a good communicator (and listener);
- goal orientated with a clear sense of delegation;
- in possession of a genuinely welcoming and inclusive attitude towards everyone and especially those with no or little belief;
- a sense of humour.

In return, you can expect from St. Mary's:

- a supportive Ministry Team, including our two assistant priests and reader;
- administrative support from PCC officers and an active, committed, enthusiastic and growing group of lay members of the congregation willing to be involved in aspects of leadership and parish life;
- a well maintained and well-proportioned four bedroom vicarage next to the church, with fairly extensive and landscaped garden;
- good local schools – both primary and secondary.

